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GROUP DISCUSSION AND ITS TECHNIQUES

A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL
REVIEW



FARMER DISCUSSION
GROUP PAMPHLET

BUREAU OF AGRICULTURAL ECONOMICS
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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GROUP DISCUSSION AND ITS TECHNIQUES; A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REVIEW

PART I. INTRODUCTION

For Whom Written

This review of the literature of group discussion is designed for the many leaders throughout the country who are assisting the people of the United States toward unraveling and understanding, through organized discussion with their neighbors, the complex tangle of events and forces that affect their lives. Because of the impact of the tire shortage on their traditional methods of education, workers today in the rural field are moving post-haste to organize small farmer discussion and action groups in every rural neighborhood.

As Secretary of Agriculture Claude R. Wickard has said, voicing a sentiment also expressed by President Roosevelt, "The call is for speed and more speed in spreading understanding of democracy through group discussion among farm people." During recent years, civic clubs, women's clubs, parent-teachers' associations, labor unions, churches, youth organizations, schools, home demonstration clubs, study clubs among clients of the Farm Security Administration, city forums, and many other groups have been finding an ever widening acceptance of the idea of democratic discussion of basic problems. The war has accentuated the speed of its acceptance.

This publication will doubtless find first use by those responsible for war-time education. It is hoped, however, that the leader of any group, regardless of its particular make-up or subject, can quickly find herein brief descriptions of the materials on technique which will be of most value in helping him meet his particular problems. Materials on the basic types of discussion—round-table, panel, and forum, and the modifications of these—are described.

As it is realized that the farm leader in his local community or the discussion leader of a city consumer organization may not have had as much experience as a county agricultural agent or an educational director of a large church, indication is given of materials most helpful for the inexperienced leader as well as for those who have led numerous discussions in the course of their work. If a publication or an article is written for a particular

group (such as farmers, teachers of vocational agriculture, other teachers, county agricultural or home demonstration agents, librarians, ministers or other religious workers), that fact is indicated.

A special section of this publication, *Mobilizing Rural Communities for Wartime Education and Action*, is devoted to the immediate problems of organization and leadership training in connection with the war. Since descriptions of actual experiences are often better than abstract principles as sources of workable suggestions, a section, *History of the Group Discussion Movement*, which lists descriptions of various discussion projects over the country, is included.

The task of searching out all the material in the field and making the first elimination was performed by John M. McNeill, of the Library of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics. James O. Howard, social scientist of the Bureau of Agricultural Economics, read the retained items, made the final decision as to what should be included, and in consultation with Mr. McNeill, wrote the manuscript.

Sources Consulted

In the selection of the books, pamphlets, and other publications cited, the following sources were examined: Card catalogs of the libraries of the United States Department of Agriculture and its Bureau of Agricultural Economics and the Office of Experiment Stations; the library of the United States Office of Education; the files of Agricultural Economics Literature, 1927 to May 1941; Agricultural Index, 1919 to April 1941; Education Index, 1929 to May 1941; Experiment Station Record, 1919 to April 1941; International Index to Periodicals, 1920 to May 1941; Psychological Abstracts, 1932 to 1940; Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin, 1920 to May 3, 1941; Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature, 1919 to May 10, 1941; and Social Science Abstracts, 1929 to 1932. In general, the period used was January 1920 through May 1941, although a few items written before this period, which show the early history of the discussion movement in this country, as well as several more recent items on the use of discussion in wartime education, are included. Not all of the references found are listed herein, but only those considered to be most helpful.

Definitions

After browsing through only a small part of the literature in this field, the reader becomes aware of the widespread disagreement among authors as to the names of the various types of discussion. Some of these techniques are new, and only after long usage will any commonly accepted name seem to crystallize; but in order that the readers of this publication may understand what its writers had in mind, definitions of these terms as used herein are given to establish a working basis. The person who is accustomed to using other terminology is reminded that no attempt is made here to give

“the correct” definitions. Furthermore, any given discussion may vary from these descriptions or may be a combination of two or more.

ROUND TABLE.—A round table is a discussion in a group small enough for all to participate and in which all present are on a basis of equality from start to finish. There is a leader, a member of the group, to whom the group has delegated the responsibility of raising the opening question, keeping the discussion on the track, and summarizing from time to time the progress of the group in thinking through the question. Other names given by various authors to this technique are “small-group discussion,” “informal discussion,” or just “group discussion.” In many cases, however, those who use these terms are not referring to round-table discussion as defined here.

PANEL.—A panel is a modified round-table discussion, varying in size from 2 to 12 members, put on before and for the benefit of an audience. The panel members generally sit in a semicircle on a platform facing the audience. The leader performs the same general functions as in a round-table discussion; toward the end of the allotted time he may or may not invite the audience to join in. The panel discussion is conversational at all times; a series of brief talks on a given subject can hardly be called a panel. The panel is sometimes called a “jury panel.”

SYMPOSIUM.—The symposium is frequently confused with the panel. The same physical arrangement of several people and a leader seated on a platform facing the audience is generally followed, but the similarity goes no farther. A symposium proceeds with a series of set speeches around a given subject which may or may not be followed by open discussion.

FORUM.—The forum usually includes a lecture followed by a certain degree of audience participation, generally in the form of questions, either written or asked orally from the floor. When the audience is small enough and the time sufficient, expressions of opinion by members of the audience may be allowed.

Basis on Which Material is Evaluated

In the evaluation of the material herein, the question foremost in mind was: “Of what value will this item be for farm people and those professional workers who serve them?” Its value for other groups was given secondary consideration. That group discussion is considered best which allows a give and take among the people who are discussing; in essence it should consist of an airing of each member’s ideas resulting in a reshaping of them in light of others’ points of view and added information. Hence the round-table discussion as defined herein is the model type; and panels and forums are variants necessitated by the size of the group or its lack of information, or both. Following this line of reasoning, in considering items on panels and forums, suggestions as to how to retain as far as possible those basic characteristics of the round-table discussion have been emphasized.

PART II. WHAT IS GROUP DISCUSSION?

What is group discussion? Does it result in something which might be called group thinking? If so, does this result differ from the individual conclusions of the various members of the group? Is the product of group discussion different from what takes place outside the country church following Sunday School or around the bridge table in country or town?

These questions as to the exact nature and psychological basis of group discussion come into mind before one has spent much time thinking about the subject.

Several persons of wide experience in the field of group discussion have written on this subject from their general observations; in addition, a number of experiments have been made by psychologists.

General Works

In the category of general works, the person who has written most widely in the field is Harrison Sackett Elliott. His writings include *The Process of Group Thinking*,¹ *Group Discussion in Religious Education*, and *The Why and How of Group Discussion*. In the early chapters of each of these books, Mr. Elliott goes into the nature of successful group discussion. The longer work, *The Process of Group Thinking*, is the most thoroughly done and gives the greatest consideration to this subject. From the terminology of the first three chapters the reader gets an insight into his point of view: Chapter I, A Methodology for Democracy; Chapter II, Misconceptions and Limitations of Group Thinking; Chapter III, The Procedure in Group Thinking. Mr. Elliott follows John Dewey's five steps in an individual's thinking and maintains that groups must follow the same general pattern if the results are to be fruitful.

A three-page article by Eduard C. Lindeman, "The Place of Discussion in the Learning Process,"² offers the results of some of the best thinking on this subject. It is strongly recommended. "The Uses and Limitations of the Discussion Method," by Irene Bennett Needham, follows and supplements this article. In "Can Forum Discussions be Reasonable," Wayne A. R. Leys makes a comparable analysis of the type of thinking that takes place in a forum.

David L. MacKaye, in "Without Teachers: Study Circles," describes the type of thinking which takes place in a typical Swedish study circle where discussion is built around great books. James H. McBurney, in the article, "Some Contributions of Classical Dialectics and Rhetoric to a

¹ A complete list, arranged by authors, of the books, pamphlets, and magazine articles referred to in this pamphlet is given on pp. 43-57.

² To differentiate magazine articles from books and pamphlets, the titles of the articles are enclosed in quotation marks whereas the titles of the books and pamphlets are italicized.

Philosophy of Discussion," also examines the kind of thinking which takes place in group discussion. He further shows how it uses the procedures of Aristotle and other early philosophers. The article isn't quite so academic as the title would indicate.

These items are of great interest only to one who is doing considerable work in group discussion. Elliott is quite readable and uses many examples from everyday life.

Scientific Experiments

When psychologists have attempted to set up experiments to find out whether group thinking and group discussions are superior to individual thinking and discussion, they have had great trouble in attempting to find a social problem for which there is a clear-cut right or wrong answer. If, for example, the subject should be whether Governors of States should be elected for 2 or 4 years, it would be difficult to judge scientifically whether the individual or the group came the closest to the "correct" answer. What is correct is a matter of opinion. Hence, such things as estimating the number of beans in a jar or forming the most words out of certain letters have been resorted to, in some instances, to learn whether conclusions reached through discussion or those made by one thinking alone, were superior. The vocabularies of psychologists are generally difficult to follow, but usually at the end they summarize in everyday language the things they have been saying.

Here are some of the more interesting of these experiments, with a brief note as to their findings. The contents are not so involved as the titles might indicate.

In William Murray Timmons' experiment, recorded in *Decisions and Attitudes As Outcomes of the Discussion of a Social Problem*, the following procedure was followed: High-school students were given especially prepared unbiased material on the possible methods for the parole of prisoners. Then they were asked the question: What, if anything, should be done about Ohio's system of releasing prisoners from prison? The experimental group was separated into small groups for discussion of that question. A "control" group returned to individual study of the problem. Both groups were then examined. Answers to the question were prepared by experts in the field of criminology. Finding—according to the experts' answers: The group that discussed had far superior opinions to those who spent the additional time in further individual study.

"The Effect of Discussion on Intra-group Divergencies of Judgment," by Ray H. Simpson, is a report of an experiment in which the problem was to ascertain the effect of group discussion in changing opinions, and whether opinions might not be changed the wrong way as often as the right. Each member of the group was tested before and after the group had been together to discuss a problem. It was found that 27 percent more were correct after than before discussion. Mr. Simpson gives a more complete

account of his experiments in *A Study of Those Who Influence and of Those Who are Influenced in Discussion*.

An experiment by Arthur Jenness, described in "The Role of Discussion in Changing Opinion Regarding a Matter of Fact," also attempts to disclose the effect of discussion in improving judgment; but whereas the above problems were social ones, here the device of estimating the number of beans in a jar is used. Again discussion improved judgment. One interesting finding the author cites was that "discussion is not effective in changing opinion unless the individuals who enter into discussion become aware of difference in opinion held by others." This would seem to indicate one of the functions which the good discussion leader must perform. Mr. Jenness wrote an earlier article on "Social Influence in the Change of Opinion," which describes some of the earlier experiments in this field.

Goodwin B. Watson in "Do Groups Think More Efficiently Than Individuals?" tells of an experiment in which the problem was to form the most possible words from 10 letters, (1) working individually and (2) working together and discussing. The findings were that "* * * the product of group thinking is superior to that of the average and even that of the best member of the group."

Using several experimental and control groups, another experimenter attempted to find answers to the following questions: (1) To what extent does discussion—in contrast to lecture—promote thinking? (2) What factors make for successful discussion? Among the most interesting results were the findings as to the effect that the form in which a question is asked has upon the response made by the group. This experiment is reported by Delbert C. Miller in "An Experiment in the Measurement of Social Interaction in Group Discussion." It is one of the most readable of these reports of scientific experiments.

In "A Comparison of Individuals and Small Groups in the Rational Solution of Complex Problems," Marjorie E. Shaw reports an experiment in which the problem was of a puzzle-solving nature, and speed was made a factor. The findings were that the groups worked a bit more slowly than individuals, but the former were more accurate. A final experiment to be listed in this category found that the majority was more often correct than the top-ranking member of the group. It is Herbert Gurnee's "A Comparison of Collective and Individual Judgments of Facts."

Three experiments should also be mentioned which attempted to disclose what effect the mere presence of other people, when no discussion was permitted—in contrast to doing the same task alone—had on speed and efficiency. In each case the students working in the room with others doing the same task were more often correct and worked more rapidly. These experiments are reported in C. Arnold Anderson's "An Experimental Study of 'Social Facilitation' as Affected by 'Intelligence'," J. F. Dashiell's "An Experimental Analysis of Some Group Effects," and Charles C. Peters' "Effect of Membership in Groups."

PART III. VALUE OF GROUP DISCUSSION

Another question and a comment which the advocate of group discussion frequently has to answer are: What is the value of discussion? Discussion never gets anywhere! Why should we discuss something when in half the time we can get some one to tell us the answer?

Use of Discussion in the Democratic Processes

Ever since the Louisiana Purchase, thoughtful citizens have been writing on the need for public discussion of social and economic problems as a prerequisite of successful democracy. During the last few years, this stream of literature has been greatly expanded.

For those seriously interested in this question, probably the first hour or two could best be spent looking over some of the scientific experiments already mentioned. However, here are some articles that are a bit easier to read.

Two of the adult-education leaders of the Nation, M. L. Wilson, Director of the Federal Agricultural Extension Service, and John W. Studebaker, United States Commissioner of Education, have already written on the need for widespread public discussion in the present crisis so that people may clarify their thinking as to what we are fighting for as well as the more specific questions that will have to be solved relative to the war and the peace. Mr. Wilson's article, written a few months before Pearl Harbor, is "Rural America Discusses Democracy" which appeared in the Public Opinion Quarterly. A portion of it was reprinted in the Extension Service Review under the title of "They Say Today Discussion Strengthens the Spirit." Mr. Studebaker has two articles on this subject, "Public Forums for Defense" and "As Beacon Lights." One of the most interesting works on the value of group discussion is a little pamphlet by a Canadian, John Macdonald, entitled *The Cornerstone of Democracy, the Discussion Group*. It gives an interesting basis for comparison between the emphasis the Canadians put on discussion and the importance given it in the United States. An article by Carl F. Taeusch, "Schools of Philosophy for Farmers," and a little pamphlet *Shall We Discuss?* by Paul C. Taff, together with an article in the *Reader's Digest* by Stanley High entitled "America Talks it Over," give a good idea of this country's side of this contrast. Taff's pamphlet is simply written and was designed for circulation among farmers.

Lyman Bryson, an outstanding leader in the field of adult education, in "The Limits of Discussion," brings us down from acclaiming the virtues of "democratic discussion" to a factual analysis of the things that cannot be accomplished by discussion as well as those that can. Lyman and Ellen

Judson in their fine little book, *Modern Group Discussion, Public and Private*, devote chapters II and III to this subject. (For further mention of this book see p. 13). One specific example is given by Lucy Wilcox Adams in "A Mirror of Minds." She traces the thinking of a California community over a period of years through the discussion topics its people selected. Some conclusions are also drawn on the effect of participation in discussion on the social attitude of people.

In three articles, "Can We the People Solve Our Problems?", "Farmer Discussion Is Adult Education," and "Rural America Revitalizes Democracy," A Drummond Jones tells how the people in the United States, particularly farmers, are using discussion more than ever before in solving their increasingly complex social and economic problems. In the second article the author attempts to analyze and appraise the nature of the "learning process" in the farmer discussion groups. A fourth article by Mr. Jones, "Will Discussion Help Teach Home Economics?", takes up the value of discussion in teaching present and future homemakers. E. R. Bowen, who is closely associated with the cooperative movement in this country, argues in "Discussion Groups—The Fundamental Form of Cooperative Education" that an active discussion program on fundamental economic problems must supply the lifeblood of any long-continuing cooperative move-



Friendliness and a democratic spirit of give and take make for long-lived neighborhood discussion groups.

ment. He cites examples from Sweden, Nova Scotia, and the United States. Following this same line of reasoning, Paul L. Vogt, in his "Study Clubs and Citizenship," goes further in maintaining that discussion is essential to "good citizenship." Elizabeth Thornton Turner's article "Why Discuss?", tells what discussion has done to revitalize the work of a county library. A great number of other examples of this nature will be found in part VI, pp. 33-49.

By far the most voluminous writer on the value of the form of discussion that is represented by public forums is John W. Studebaker, United States Commissioner of Education and Director of the Federal Forum Project. Several of his articles are listed later under Forum Technique. His outstanding work in this field is *The American Way; Democracy at Work in the Des Moines Forums*. Most of this book is devoted to a description of the Des Moines Forum but the first three chapters discuss the general need for public forums.

Mary Lillian Ely recently made a survey of the entire forum movement and attempted to work at its roots to see what it is contributing to public enlightenment. She visited many of the leading forums and talked with their leaders. Interesting sketches are given of many of the programs she attended. Her conclusions are presented in the book *Why Forums?* Two good short articles along the same line should be mentioned. The first is Helen Dwight Reid's "Educating Adults for Democratic Citizenship." Miss Reid has lectured for the Federal Forum Project in New York and writes in an exceptionally interesting way. The second article is "Social Values of the Open Forum" by Haven N. Davis. Mr. Davis lists and discusses seven social values. "The Forum," he says, "is broadly educating"; "is a socializing force in American life"; "tends to educate public opinion"; "develops a sense of civic responsibility"; "serves as a safety valve for repressed feelings"; "cultivates a tolerant attitude"; and "provides a means whereby the avenues of free speech may be kept open."

For those who want to interest sophisticated women in forums, Alice Mary Kimball's article, "Forums Are Fun," will offer some suggestions. Not only is the "enlightened citizenship" approach utilized, but also she says (though these are not her exact words) that taking in the forums gives you something to talk about, makes you a brilliant hostess. Why not have the forum leader or some equally able person drop in some evening along with your friends and have a "different" party by chatting about some of the problems of the world?

If the reader needs reminding that the argument in favor of forums hasn't changed appreciably in two decades, he will be interested in "The Community Forum and the Chamber of Commerce" by A. Lyle De Jarnette.

Several other items on the value of discussion can be listed with little comment. Among them are John W. Herring's "Forum Dialog" (a well-written statement in the form of a dialog between an advocate of forums

and one who opposes them); Alva H. Benton's "Rural Pastors at the Town Meeting," (a brief article on discussion as a tool with which the rural minister can do a more effective job); and Elizabeth Watson Pollard's "Give Youth Discussion Practice" (showing how few students have any experience in organizing group discussion and what this shortcoming means to them.) M. L. Wilson, former Under Secretary of Agriculture, and now Director of the Extension Service, has outlined his philosophy of round-table discussion in "Great National Movement among Farmers"; "Cracker-barrels, 1937 Model"; and "Education for Democracy." He stresses the part that discussion groups can play in evaluating the farm program and in revitalizing democracy in rural areas.

Three other items which consider the value of discussion in classroom teaching are: "Improving Education Through Discussion Groups" by Francis L. Bacon; "The Harkness Gift to Phillips Exeter" by Frank W. Cushwa; and "Developing Discussion Leaders" by W. D. Boyle.

Discussion vs. Debate

A number of enthusiastic advocates of the discussion technique have written articles questioning the value of debate as a method of education. Some debate teachers have risen in defense of their field; others have conceded that discussion in certain situations might well supplant debate. Here are some of the articles pro and con.

That Discussion is Superior.

Edward Hodnett in "Public Discussion in the College" shows how the debate coach at Columbia University has substituted a "Public Discussion Council" for a "debate squad." The council sponsors forums, panels, round tables and three regular radio programs.

Other articles defending discussion are "Reason and the 'Fight Image'" by H. A. Overstreet; "Changing Concepts in the Meaning and Value of Group Discussion" by Robert Allison; and "Is a Substitute for Debate Needed to Provide Training in Scientific Group Thinking?" by James F. Bursch.

That Debate is Superior.

The article entitled "Debate or Conference?" by Dayton D. McKean, holds out for debate.

That the Two Should be Used Together.

Advocates for using the two methods in combination are: Raymond H. Barnard in "Debate and Discussion—A Good Team"; and Lester Thonssen in "The Social Values of Discussion and Debate."

PART IV. MOBILIZING RURAL COMMUNITIES FOR WARTIME EDUCATION AND ACTION

As this manuscript goes to press, professional agricultural workers, realizing the magnitude of the educational job they must accomplish with little or no use of automobiles, are making haste to set up walking-distance neighborhood groups and to train hundreds of thousands of local leaders for these group meetings. This section attempts to present some of the best materials on methods of accomplishing this job.

This job of mobilizing neighborhood groups is much more than a matter of discussion. Discussion is one of the tools to be used. Personal contacts by the neighborhood leader is another. The problem is one of how to select the leaders and the area to be covered by each, how to train the leaders, and perfect over-all community, county, and State organization, and how to coordinate all activity for greatest efficiency.

In March 1942, the Federal Agricultural Extension Service called a meeting of State and Federal leaders to consider this problem. The outcome of this conference was an outline of how this mobilization might best be effected by assisting farm people to divide into natural neighborhood groupings with a leader for every 15 or 20 families. It also suggests materials that will be needed, the duties of the workers on each level and how to select and train these leaders. This outline is presented in a processed publication, *National Conference on Voluntary Local Leadership*.³ A brief of this same material is given in an article, "Needed—A Million Neighborhood Leaders." This report of the national conference was followed some weeks later with a "first assignment" for these neighborhood groups, *Educational Program on Controlling the Cost of Living*, which deals with an explanation of the price controls set by the Office of Price Administration. Included, among other things, are discussion questions, and a brief one-act play describing the effects of inflation.

In this same field the Farm Security Administration has prepared two pamphlets for the use of its workers. *How Neighborhoods and Communities Aid Farm Security Administration Group Programs* contains a description of how to delineate natural neighborhoods and communities which is easy to follow and should be of service to all workers in the rural field. *Supervisors Guide For Community and Cooperative Services* goes into step by step detail on how to set up neighborhood groups, bringing the farmers together for the first time, building leadership, how to set the pattern for a lasting educational program, and how to combine discussion and action. Parts of this pamphlet will be of interest only to Farm Security workers.

³ Items for which authorship are not indicated are given by title, both in the text and in the List of Works Referred To, pages 43-57.

Three examples of areas that made an early start in this program of neighborhood organization offer first-hand pictures of how it works. Frederick B. Sweet's "Production Now! To Win the War" gives a striking picture of how farmers, labor groups, and business men in Morrow County, Ohio, have organized to overcome barriers to maximum production. Excerpts from their first discussion are included. "Two Leaders for Sixteen Families" by R. K. Bliss, director of the Iowa Agricultural Extension Service, describes this work in Iowa, and Paul E. Miller's "We Have Lengthened Our Reach—Multiplied War Responsibilities Met by Training Local Leaders" pictures this work in Minnesota.

"Rural Community Mobilization in the War Effort" by Douglas Ensminger gives an excellent argument for turning this educational job over to the local neighborhoods. Mr. Ensminger says:

* * * By mobilizing neighborhood and community groups we can assist local people, working through their community groups, to think straight, get the desired facts, to formulate well-founded judgments, turn gossip into education, and convert fear into faith and confidence.

Many people busy in various wartime drives in the rural counties have wished for time to go into newspaper and periodical files and see how and with what success such problems were attacked during the last war. C. Arnold Anderson and Bryce Ryan made such a study in Iowa, *War Came to the Iowa Community*. The study leaves many questions unanswered, but it should be of considerable assistance.

PART V. TECHNIQUES OF GROUP DISCUSSION

“Why won’t people express their views in meetings?” “What is the job of the discussion leader?” “I want to set up a forum program in my town. How shall I proceed?” “Is it possible to have a really effective panel discussion?” “Are there any inexpensive well-written pamphlets on leading round-table discussion that I, as a leader, can give the people with whom I work?” These questions are frequent.

Here are probably the best works written to answer these questions on the techniques of discussion.

Books Covering All Forms of Discussion

The general works covering all forms of discussion—round table, panel, forum, etc.—can first be considered from the standpoint of their value as handbooks on technique for the leader who must be acquainted with the entire field. Their treatment of each form of discussion is considered later under Round-Table Discussion Technique, Forum Technique, etc.

To point out a best book is in this instance, impossible because what is best for each reader will vary with his background and type of work. On the basis of thoroughness, soundness, and readability, however, the best books might be evaluated somewhat in the following order.

Lyman and Ellen Judson’s *Modern Group Discussion, Public and Private* would probably head the list. It begins with a brief history of the movement; then follows a chapter on uses and benefits, and one surveying the extent of present use. This takes up only the first 36 pages. The next 3 chapters discuss the problems common to most methods of discussion: how to plan a discussion meeting, duties of the chairman, how to get people to participate, etc. Chapter III describes the various forms of discussion and the special problems involved in each. Unfortunately, in enumerating and describing the types of discussion meetings, the authors do not include an effective discussion of round-table discussion as defined in this publication on page 3. However, chapters V, VIII, and IX are directed mainly to the leader of that discussion situation in which primary reliance for the conduct of the meeting is on the contributions of the group. To fill this gap in this otherwise excellent little book, there is another by Mr. Judson, *A Manual of Group Discussion*, which deals entirely with the technique of round-table discussion and is one of the best yet written. Together they give a practically complete fund of the needed information.

Thomas Fansler’s *Discussion Methods for Adult Groups* might be considered an advance course for one who had previously read the two Judson books. This is not that Mr. Fansler’s book is more difficult to read—it is written

in simple and pleasing language. But rather than giving rules of procedure 1, 2, 3, as he takes up each method of discussion, Mr. Fansler briefly describes each and discusses its relative merits and shortcomings and the type of situation in which it works best. This is followed in each case by one or two transcripts of that type of discussion. These illustrative discussions are then carefully analyzed, showing what the leader did and how he handled the various problems that arose. This feature leads to the recommendation of Fansler's book only to those who have had enough experience in leading discussions to appreciate the problems arising in the discussions recorded.

A. D. Mueller's books, *Principles and Methods in Adult Education* covers numerous other methods than those of discussion but his thinking is so sound and his description so clear that it must be given an important place among the general books. His treatment of the forum is brief and does not measure up to his discussions of the panel and the round table.

One minor criticism of Fansler and Mueller is that they describe only the most commonly used methods of discussion. This is not true of *Discussion Methods Explained and Illustrated* by Jasper V. Garland and Charles F. Phillips. In the latter book a director of debate and a professor of economics combine to discuss round-table discussion (here called informal group discussion), committee discussion, panel, colloquy, forum, symposium, debate, and radio discussion. The description under each method occurs under such heading as What Is It, How It Operates, What It Seeks To Do, Role of the Leader. Finally several specific problems which the leader faces are considered. In each case this description is followed (as in Fansler's book) by a transcript of an actual discussion. One important criticism, and this applies particularly to the part on informal group discussion, is that the discussion used to illustrate the method violates many of the rules which the authors lay down; yet the authors make no attempt to analyze these illustrations and point out their shortcomings. Consequently, the transcripts are of little help to the reader.

The most voluminous book in the field is *The Principles and Methods of Discussion* by James H. McBurney and Kenneth G. Hance. Written primarily as a college text, this book is somewhat wordy and abstract and is not recommended to the person who wants to learn the most about discussion leadership in the least possible time. But it represents a great deal of sound thought and makes a fine supplement to some of the titles listed above. Particularly is this true in the psychological aspects of the field—as, for example, the type of reasoning which takes place in groups. On round-table technique it offers most help for the person with considerable experience. By picturing the problems and procedures described here in terms of his actual experience, the reader can appreciate much that would be lost without that background. Chapter XVI on The Panel, Dialogue, Symposium, Forum Lecture and Chapter XVII on The Forum deserve note. In the appendixes are an interesting analysis of a student discussion

and transcriptions of a Chicago Round Table and an American Town Meeting of the Air.

An interesting distinction among the methods of discussion is given in *Adult Education, A Dynamic for Democracy*, by Dorothy Hewitt and Kirtley F. Mather. The methods are divided as (1) methods of "the search for truth" (small group discussion, the public conversation, and panel discussion) and (2) methods of "dispensing information" (lecture, forum, symposium and debate).

The "search for truth" is, as these authors use it, the process by which members of a group think together in an attempt to answer a question, using the facts which they have, whereas the methods of "dispensing information" are those by which new facts are brought to the group. As can be readily seen, the public conversation and the panel might well come under the second heading, if the persons composing the panel and conversation were experts on the subject being discussed. Only a relatively brief description is given of each of these methods but the sketches are exceptionally well presented and are interspersed with timely illustrations which make the discussions easy to follow. Because of its brevity, this book is not one of the most important, but will be of great interest to the more serious student of discussion.



The test of a discussion's success is in whether the subject is continued over the coffee.

In *The Process of Group Thinking* by Harrison Sackett Elliott, the author does not describe the various methods of discussion. Instead, he attempts to analyze how groups think, the factors that encourage and discourage their thinking process, how outside facts can be brought in through the most effective uses of experts, etc. The group-thinking process is to him, as it is to Judson, to McBurney and Hance, and to Sheffield (see p. 20), a problem-solving-in-preparation-for-action process rather than a general educational one. He will take as an illustration a group discussing "How shall we plan a party to raise money for our organization?" rather than an educational subject in which no immediate action will be taken by the group, such as, "What should be the policy of the United States toward Latin America?". However, the general thought process as he outlines it for the former type is almost equally applicable to the latter. This book might well follow Fansler's as the second "advanced course," for here we get one of the best analyses of how groups think.

Another book to be listed here is offered not so much because of its appropriateness as because it is practically unique. To use his words, Robert D. Leigh's book, *Group Leadership*, is "intended for the person * * * who for the first time suddenly finds himself on the platform of a school, lodge, club, or convention meeting, offered a gavel and asked to preside over discussion. It is intended also for the person who as suddenly is seated at the head of a committee table and assigned the task of worrying with four or five other minds in the joint solution of a problem too delicate or too difficult for a numerous assembly." Hence it embraces everything from forums and business meetings of luncheon clubs to constitutional conventions. Because of this ambitious scope of the undertaking, only small consideration is given to the types of meetings considered in this bibliographic review. The most interesting feature is the simplified rules of procedure which he has prepared to take the place of the more complicated parliamentary law and Robert's *Rules of Order*.

Pamphlets and Magazine Articles Covering All Forms of Discussion

D. C. Dvoracek's little pamphlet *Community Discussion Meetings—What? Why? How?* has much to recommend it. Addressed to farmers and those working with farmers, it is brief, yet describes round-table discussion (here called informal discussion), panel, and forum, and the type of situations in which each works best. *Rural Discussion Groups* by H. S. Johnson is similar to it both in purpose and in design. In addition, Mr. Johnson gives some space to the "why" of group discussion.

A. F. Wileden and H. L. Eubank have written a pamphlet called *How to Conduct Group Discussion* which deviates from much of the established terminology and differs with many of the above works as to procedures. It contains an interesting description of what would seem more nearly to

come under the definition of a symposium (p. 3) which has been used quite successfully by the authors as a means of stimulating round-table discussion.

Joseph F. O'Brien's "A Definition and Classification of the Forms of Discussion" is an attempt further to divide various types of discussion. It is of interest only to the careful student.

In "Discussion, Lecture-Forum, and Debate," Alfred D. Sheffield, one of the leading writers in the field of discussion, presents some valuable, but rather academic, ideas.

Round-Table Discussion Technique

Practically all writers in the field agree that an informal small group is the best for discussion. It permits the most democratic form of discussion: participants are all on a basis of equality and its final value is the sum of the individual thoughts expressed. Each idea advanced excites a new train of thought in someone else's mind and, in the great majority of cases, the group arrives at a conclusion that is superior to that which its most intelligent member would have reached had he thought alone. All the scientific experiments listed above bear out this belief. But two factors limit the usefulness of this technique: (1) The amount of information which the group members may have on the subject being discussed, and, (2) the size of the group. The maximum number of people for good round-table discussion, as given by different writers, varies from 10 to 40. Certainly the effectiveness of the discussion decreases as the group goes above this upper limit.

In attempting to preserve the values of the round-table discussion when working with larger groups, the panel and symposium have been developed. The extent to which the forum comes within this category depends upon the relative emphasis placed upon the discussion that follows the lecture, and whether it is really discussion or merely questions from the audience to the speaker.

The need of the small group for additional facts or information may be met in several ways. The expert with the facts may be used to give the group the benefit of his knowledge. The most common example of the use of the expert is the forum; he merely makes a speech and then answers questions. If experts are used on a panel or symposium they become means to this end. More and more the round-table technique under strong leadership is being used with larger groups, and the experts are kept on the side lines until a point of information arises which the leader asks them to supply. Another approach to the question of supplying information is the distribution, in advance of the discussion meeting, of informative material to all who may be expected to take part in the discussion.

In spite of their outward differences, the things which these varying techniques have in common stand out much more than those which

differentiate them. Regardless of the set-up used to handle the larger groups or to add needed facts, if one is attempting to lead real discussion—which Ralph Barton Perry defines as “a cooperative search for the truth”—he will always face certain problems: How shall I best help the group to proceed logically and toward conclusions? How can we establish an attitude of mutual respect for the opinions of others and a welcoming of that contribution which refashions one’s own cherished ideas? How shall I handle the person who talks too often; the one who talks too long; or the one who won’t speak at all?

These problems have been most completely treated in writings dealing with round-table discussion. Hence, the materials on round-table discussion technique are probably the most important covered in this pamphlet. In a way, what is said under the other headings is only a supplement to this section.

Books

Many of the pamphlets designed for leaders of round-table discussion are more complete than the sections on round-table technique in books already considered under books Covering All Forms of Discussion, pp. 13–16. Consequently, those books are listed here in order of importance to the subject of this particular section, with only brief notes.

Lyman S. Judson’s *A Manual of Group Discussion* is certainly one of the best. As it is designed especially for farm leaders, county and home demonstration agents, etc., its illustrations are drawn from agriculture. Otherwise, it offers just as much help to nonagricultural groups. It is not the most profound book of the group, but it probably gives as many ideas per minute’s reading as any. The last 50 pages, on Preparing Your Speech, will interest only a limited group. The other chapters, however, on organizing the discussion meetings, the chairman and his job, the member and his responsibilities, and priming the group-discussion pump, treat most of the problems that the discussion leader faces. The latter offers interesting suggestions for ways to vary the beginning of the discussions. Examples are “true-false tests,” “order of importance test,” “case study.” Chapter V on Discussion Team Exchanges and Tournaments describes a set-up which has been worked out by D. E. Lindstrom, State Discussion Leader in the Illinois Agricultural Extension Service, in an attempt to capture some of the rivalry of debate. The chief criticism of the book is that Mr. Judson defines discussion as a problem-solving technique, yet treats it in all but the first two chapters as a general educational method.

The next two books, the first by Elliott, and the second co-authored by McBurney and Hance, are somewhat heavier reading and are recommended only to those who are making a concentrated study of the processes of discussion and the nature of group thinking.

The Process of Group Thinking by Harrison S. Elliott has been discussed

in part on pages 4 and 16. The author goes into the reasons why groups, on so many occasions, never move from the early stage of individually held ideas and beliefs. There is also a discussion of the role of the leader, his preparation and special problems, and finally, how to bring in outside information through experts, reading, etc. A few of the chapter headings dealing with this subject will give further indications of the content: Suggestions on the Conduct of Group Thinking, The Chairmanship of Group Thinking, Exploring the Question in Preparation for a Discussion, Preliminary Plans for Conducting a Discussion, What to do With Emotional Prejudice and Bias. Frequent illuminating illustrations of the point under discussion are given.

As *The Principles and Methods of Discussion* by James H. McBurney and Kenneth G. Hance is written primarily as a college text, it doesn't lend itself so readily as some of the other books to being read straight through. The first 287 pages are given over to small-group discussion. In general outline the book is similar to Elliott's.

Principles and Methods in Adult Education, by A. D. Mueller, is probably second only to Judson's book in the ideas it presents in a limited space. Chapters VI, VII, VIII, take up round-table discussions. Chapter VIII gives one of the best simply written descriptions yet found of the job of the discussion leader. These chapters are recommended to any one who has an hour or two to spend in gleaning ideas on how to improve his leadership technique.

Adult Education, A Dynamic for Democracy, by Dorothy Hewitt and Kirtley F. Mather, devotes only 22 pages to small-group discussion, but they are exceptionally well written and clearly illustrated, and they furnish pleasant reading.

Although in their book *Modern Group Discussion, Public and Private*, Lyman and Ellen Judson do not describe too clearly the method of discussion which they are considering; pages 37-89 and 119-145 are germane to the subject here. Chapter V (pp. 53-76) on The Discussion Chairman, which takes up the duties of the discussion leader, deserves particular recommendation.

Thomas Fansler's *Discussion Methods for Adult Groups* devotes 44 pages to this subject (part II), the last 33 of which give two of the best analyses yet found of the proceedings of actual discussions.

Round-table discussion is described in *Discussion Methods Explained and Illustrated* by Jasper V. Garland and Charles F. Phillips in Chapter I, pages 17-63; pages 28-63 give two illustrative discussions.

Finally, mention should be made of Frank Walser's *The Art of Conference*. Mr. Walser is never very clear about what he means by "conference." As references are generally to international political conferences, they are of little value to the student of round-table discussion. But he makes a contribution when he emphasizes, more than any other writer, the value of the pause, insisting that it is often better for the leader to wait rather than fill in the embarrassing silence that often occurs after he has asked the opening question.

Pamphlets for Experienced Discussion Leaders

Several pamphlets will be of interest to professional workers, in the field of discussion. Most of them are rather inclusive for the layman who is having his first introduction to discussion leadership. They are listed in their general order of importance.

In *Teaching Adults by Discussion* Thomas Fansler assumes that the reader is convinced of the value of discussion and so wastes no time in getting to the techniques. Chapter topics are: What Can Profitably be Discussed?, General Methods of Discussion, How to Get Discussion Started, Rules for Meaningful Discussion, Some Difficult "Persons," and Discussion That "Gets Somewhere." The subtopics under Rules for Meaningful Discussion, give an example of the further break-down under each of these headings. They are: Listening and Talking, Avoiding Meaningless Chatter, Avoiding Quibbles, Acting Naturally, and Achieving Informality.

The subject matter discussed in LeRoy C. Bowman's *How to Lead Discussion: A Guide for the Use of Group Leaders* is similar to that covered by Mr. Fansler. Mr. Bowman's suggestions on how to keep the discussion informal are particularly good.

Alfred Dwight Sheffield's *Creative Discussion; Methods for Leaders and Members of Discussion Groups*, is a bit more philosophical than the others listed



These young wives make up one of many such groups that have formed their own discussion clubs.

here. It is likewise more thought-provoking. The first appendix is especially useful, for it contains very good 1-2-3 suggestions for the discussion leader.

Two pamphlets by Harrison S. Elliott that can be listed together are *Group Discussion in Religious Education* and *The Why and How of Group Discussion*. Both contain about the same material and both follow the same general ideas expressed in the larger books. The pamphlets were written especially for Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A., Student Volunteer, and church groups. Hence the illustrations are in that general field of interest; otherwise, the material is equally valuable for workers in any field. The pattern in both is to begin by examining the way an individual thinks through a problem. Using this as the process through which real group thinking should go, Mr. Elliott discusses qualifications of the good leader, his preparation and procedure. Several effective examples of how to breakdown a subject for discussion are given. The second pamphlet is shorter, more simply written, and devotes more space to the need for and place of discussion.

D. M. Hall's *How to Lead Adult Groups in Solving Their Own Problems* is prepared especially for farm leaders. This pamphlet can be used by the thoughtful layman as well as by the person who has had considerable experience. "The discussion leader's skill in guiding group thinking," Mr. Hall says, "is essentially a skill in asking questions. It is the kinds of the questions rather than the number that makes discussion a success." This pamphlet is practical and down-to-earth. No sooner is a point made than several illustrations are drawn from real life to show its application. Some of the subtopics used will give a further idea of the content: What Should Be My Major Objectives in Leading Discussion?, Standards for Straight Thinking, How Can I Select Satisfactory Discussion Problems?, What Are the Guiding Principles for Leading a Discussion?, How Can I Develop Interest in the Topic Being Discussed?

Group Work with Adults Through the Church is of primary interest to people in religious work. This pamphlet takes up other group activity, but 2 of its 7 chapters give good suggestions for conducting discussions. The first chapter, Procedure in Group Discussion, describes the logical development in thinking through from understanding a problem to agreeing on a solution. Examples are given of the outline for a Bible lesson and a study course. The second chapter on The Leadership of Group Discussion takes up the practical problems faced by the leader. The scope of this discussion is somewhat limited, but is sound, well written, and well supplied with examples.

Three other brief pamphlets which are primarily designed to aid those leaders who work with farm people should be listed. They are Eugene Merritt's *Group Discussions and the Problems of Farm Young People; Cooperative*

Discussion Circles: A Guide Book on the Organization and Leadership of Discussion Groups; and *The Conference Procedure in Teaching Vocational Agriculture*. Merritt's pamphlet is designed primarily for those working with young people in the Agricultural Extension Service, but it is equally useful to those in other fields. One of its unique features is the subdividing of several farm problems, showing what part of each would be handled by three teaching methods: (1) Informing (lecture); (2) demonstrations; (3) discussion. The second pamphlet, issued by the Ohio Farm Bureau, consists of a somewhat undigested collection of quotations from other sources. But on the last page it mentions a service rendered by the Farm Bureau, in cooperation with the Ohio Agricultural Extension Service, which will be of interest to all farm-organization leaders. This service consists of a series of weekly radio broadcasts on pertinent farm problems, especially designed to stimulate discussion among small groups over the State who would meet to carry on after the broadcast was over. The "conference procedure" described in the pamphlet for teachers of vocational agriculture is practically synonymous with round-table discussion. It will also be of interest to others working with farm people in technical fields—county agents, Farm Security supervisors, etc.

D. E. Lindstrom's *Organizing Rural Discussion Team Tourneys* supplements Judson's description of this discussion-team competition. As all but the first four pages are devoted to listing the teachers of speech in Illinois who might be secured to help in this undertaking, the pamphlet will be of primary interest to workers in that State.

Organizers of round-table discussions will also be interested in the little leaflet by P. F. Ayer, the State Discussion Leader in the Agricultural Extension Service of New Hampshire, *We the People*. It is designed to induce rural people to volunteer as round-table discussion leaders and to give some indication of the extent to which the Extension Service of that State is prepared to conduct meetings devoted to leadership training.

Pamphlets for the Inexperienced Discussion Leader

Often a leader—home demonstration agent, Parent-Teachers' Association president, Sunday School teacher, farm-organization president, or educational director of a labor group—in attempting to develop leaders among his people wants a brief, simply written pamphlet containing the ABC's of discussion leadership which can be given to a person the first time he is asked to lead a discussion. Here are pamphlets which meet that demand, given in the general order of their effectiveness.

The best three might be discussed together. They are *This Business of Leading Discussion* by Benson Y. Landis; *How to Plan Discussion Programs* by Robert A. Polson; and *What is the Discussion Leader's Job?* The pamphlet by Landis is perhaps the most readable; Polson's is prepared for farm groups and contains sources of materials for farmer discussion groups. Either of them can be read in 15 minutes. The third pamphlet is somewhat longer

and more complete. It is equally easy to read, is well illustrated by examples, and can be carefully read in less than a half hour. It gives an illustration of how a subject should be subdivided by the leader as he makes his preparations. It, too, is especially designed for farm groups, but this should not decrease its effectiveness for others.

Discussion Methods, by E. C. Hollinger and Emma Hawk, is another pamphlet practically as good as those by Landis and Polson. It contains paragraphs on the panel and forum. The briefest and most concise work of all is *Suggestions for Group Discussion Leaders* which is a one-sheet leaflet. On one side are 10 rules for getting ready for the discussion—setting up the room, getting acquainted, etc. On the other side are 10 rules for “carrying on”—how to get discussion started, handling particular problems, the use of summaries, etc. There is a companion sheet, *Suggestions for Discussion Group Members*, which takes up similar problems from the viewpoint of a member of the group. It is very good to hand out in advance to the group that is attempting discussion for the first time.

Several pamphlets in mimeographed form are useful. They are *Conducting Group Discussion*, by David E. Lindstrom; *First Steps in the Group Discussion Method*, by Dorothy Emerson and E. G. Jenkins; *Discussion Guide*, by Milton C. Cummings, revised by Frank Walser; and *Cooperative Discussion Clubs*, by Carl R. Hutchinson. Lindstrom’s pamphlet is rather heavier reading than most of those mentioned in this section, filling a somewhat comparable place to *What is the Discussion Leader’s Job?* In addition to round-table discussion, it discusses the use of lecture, panel, and symposium, as ways of getting discussion started. The pamphlets by Cummings and by Emerson and Jenkins are substantially superior. For older youth groups the latter pamphlet deserves strong recommendation.

The University of Chicago Press in cooperation with the American Council on Education has published several “American Primers” which are simply written pamphlets on important subjects. *Let’s Talk It Over* by Mildred J. Wiese, Lyman Bryson, and Wilbur C. Hallenbeck is a pamphlet on discussion technique to accompany the primers. It contains provocative discussion questions, but is only fair on technique.

Magazine Articles

Here are several magazine articles which possibly add to the ideas presented in the books and pamphlets.

Any person responsible for a discussion program on a State-wide or county basis will find exceptionally helpful Martin P. Andersen’s article “Group Discussion as a Phase of Adult Education in Rural Wisconsin.” Andersen is the group discussion specialist in the Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Service. In this article he describes in some detail the method used in that State to organize and keep in operation a farmer round-table discussion movement. This procedure included leader-training meetings,

the preparation of materials, radio broadcasts on the various discussion topics, and an annual State-wide Leaders' Conference.

"Determining Standards in English Composition. II. Standards in Round-table Discussion," by Roy I. Johnson, is one of the better statements of the problems of good discussion. They are given in 1, 2, 3 order. Listed are 30 difficulties faced by the discussion leader; 19 faced by the members; 20 qualities which the discussion leader should possess; and 22 which the members of the group should possess. It raises problems without offering solutions, but does constitute a thorough statement of those problems.

"Techniques of Group Leadership," by Ralph de Someri Childs, follows the general outline of most of the pamphlets. It contains interesting suggestions on how to get people to talk. "Creative Discussion in Adult Education," by Emily Solis-Cohen, presents the thought that there should be a "leading out"—getting people to express their ideas on a subject—before there is a "pouring in"—the lecture, etc.

"The Fine Art of Discussion," by Frank M. McMurry, is one of the best concise statements as to why discussions fail and what the leader can do to prevent such failures. In "The Discussion Leader as Host" Thomas Fansler says that it is well for the leader of round-table discussion to act as he would if the group were dropping into his home for an evening. Otherwise, this article has little to offer those who have read his pamphlet.

Although addressed particularly to Business and Professional Women's Clubs, Marjorie Fiske's "Discussion's the Thing, but How to Lead One?" is equally valuable for the members of any woman's organization—Parent-Teachers' Associations, Home Demonstration Clubs, federated women's clubs, etc. Not only are the jobs of the leader and group member discussed, but also how to discover and develop competent discussion leaders among the membership of your own organization. Eduard C. Lindeman's "Social Methods for Social Problems" is an analytical summary of what discussion should accomplish and the over-all job of the discussion leader.

Of Interest to Teachers

Leslie Day Zeleny has done some interesting work with students in an attempt to discover the characteristics of a good discussion leader. He records his findings in "Characteristics of Group Leaders" and "Objective Selection of Group Leaders." These articles are somewhat abstract but are interesting to the careful student.

Discussion as a method of class-room teaching has been treated by numerous writers. Alfred Dwight Sheffield's *Training for Group Experience* is an outline for a college course designed to train group leaders. William Henry Lancelot's *Handbook of Teaching Skills* contains two pertinent chapters on planning and leading the class discussion. "The Conference Procedure in Agricultural Education," by George P. Deyoe, is particularly recommended for agricultural teachers. Robert C. Jackson's "The Conference Method in Education" is very good for teachers in secondary education but

of little interest to anyone else. The use of the discussion technique in teaching a class in college journalism is described in "A New Type of College Course," by J. B. Miner. "Discussion Clubs for Students," by Clay Coss, is a description of the methods of developing discussion groups among students for the purpose of studying current events. It is very well done. In this group also belongs Gladys Murphy Graham's "Discussion Method and Speech Training."

Of Interest to Religious Leaders

Harrison S. Elliott's *Group Discussion in Religious Education*, and *The Why and How of Group Discussion*, previously noted (see pp. 4, 21); and *Group Work with Adults Through the Church* (p. 21) are pertinent and valuable to religious leaders.

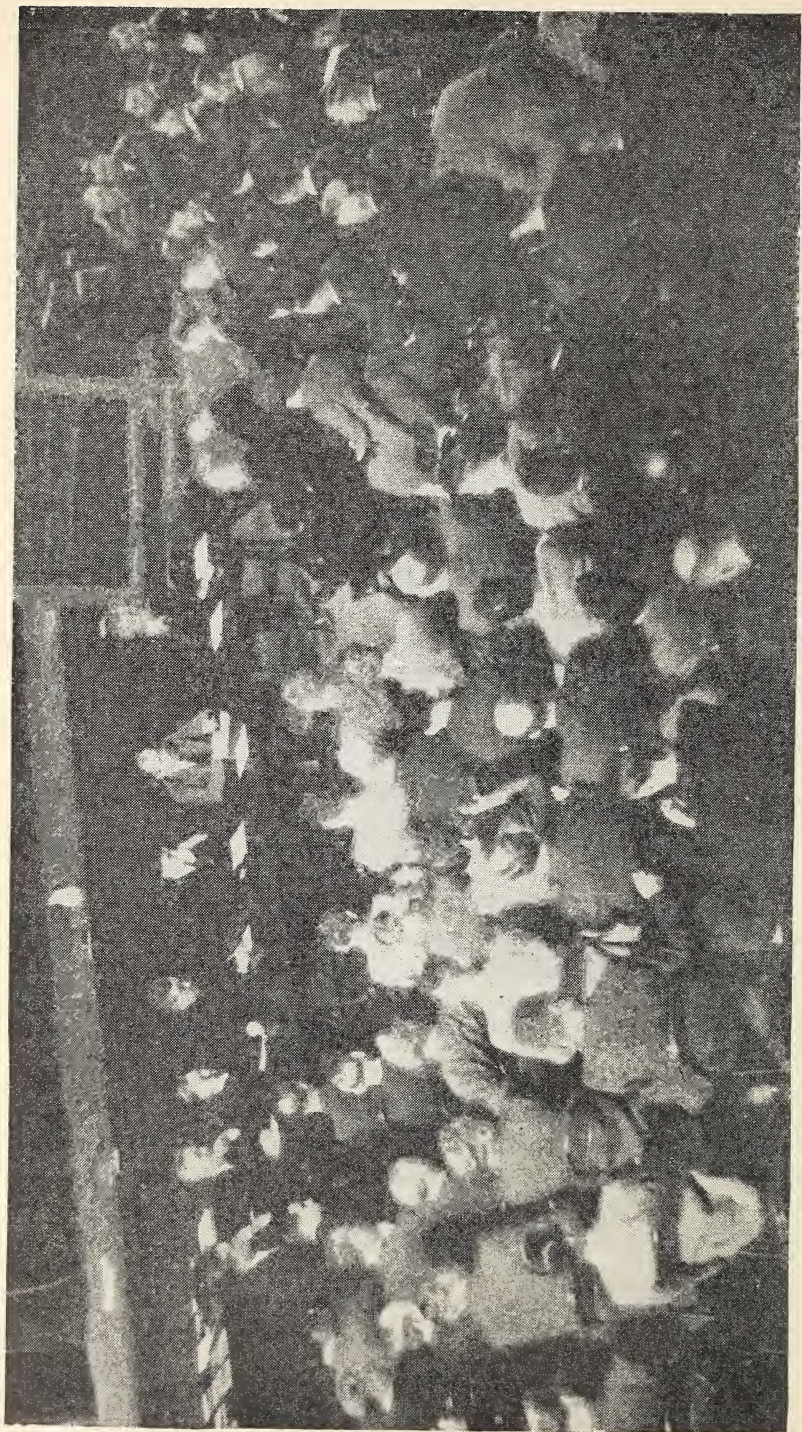
The book *Discussing Religion Creatively*, by Clarence and Laura Athearn, attempts to (1) convince the reader that discussion is a good teaching medium, and (2) give suggestions as to how such teaching should be done. The fact that it considers discussion as a technique whereby a teacher most effectively puts over his ideas limits considerably the scope of its use. But within that scope it is strongly recommended. A brief magazine article which should be mentioned along with this book, since it takes the opposite concept of discussion, is "Leading Adults to Think Out Loud," by John R. Scotford. Some of the problems of round-table discussion are considered, and suggestions as to how they can be met are given. The preacher who says, "Our people will not talk," is the preacher who never gave them a chance to talk, says Mr. Scotford.

Of Interest to Librarians

Writing in *Adult Education and the Library*, Elta Lenart in her article "Discussion Groups" tells how discussion groups can be tied in with the library. Lucy Wilcox Adams, in "The Talk of the Town," tells how California's Association for Adult Education sponsors discussion in local libraries. Good books are used to stimulate the discussion. Finally, the way in which discussion can be used in library staff conferences as a medium of educating the staff to the job to be done, is described by Duncan Carter and Helen Seymour in "The Discussion Method for Libraries."

Of Interest to Business Men and Women

Two pamphlets and a magazine article which show how discussion may be used by business executives or personnel officers in the democratic formation of policy are here listed without comment. They are *Conference Planning and Leadership as Applied to Foremanship Training*, *Executive Leadership: Conference Leader's Manual*, and Frank Cushman's "The Conference as an Educational Procedure."



“A series of set speeches can hardly be called a panel.” Note the informality.

For the Discussion-Group Member

In addition to the leaflet *Suggestions for Discussion Group Members* (p. 23), there is a pamphlet addressed to "this forgotten man in the discussion group" by Thomas Fansler, entitled *Effective Group Discussion: A Guide for Group Members*. It is simply written, can be read in 15 minutes, and would be excellent to give to someone who had done little participating in discussion. It would increase his interest in discussion as well as give him a better idea of his place in it.

Panel Technique

The panel technique is only about a decade old. Consequently, those who write about it cannot draw from the years of tested experience that mark other discussion methods. The youthfulness of this technique is also indicated by the frequent way the most recent writers cite their predecessors who have written on the subject. There is little disagreement among these writers as to what is the best procedure.

Books

The four books which have the best sections on the panel are about equal in value in this respect. Each takes up the occasions where the panel can be used advantageously, what it is supposed to accomplish, how to choose the members, physical set-up, and duties of the leader and of the members. These four books, each of which has been described under round-table discussion are *Discussion Methods for Adult Groups*, by Thomas Fansler; *Discussion Methods Explained and Illustrated*, by Garland and Phillips; *Adult Education, A Dynamic for Democracy*, by Hewitt and Mather; and *The Principles and Methods of Discussion*, by McBurney and Hance. The chief factor which makes Fansler's book and the one by Garland and Phillips preferred over the other two is that they include texts of actual panel discussions. On this point Fansler's is perhaps better for notes are inserted throughout the text, interpreting what the leader is doing in each case. Garland and Phillips make no comment on their recorded panel, although it violates some of the procedures which they outline.

Three other books also make contributions in this field: *Principles and Methods of Adult Education*, by A. D. Mueller; *Modern Group Discussion, Public and Private*, by Judson and Judson; and *A Manual of Group Discussion*, by Lyman Judson. These authors disagree with those above on several points. Mueller, for example, suggests that the panel leader express his ideas just as any other member of the panel. Further, he describes what the other writers call a symposium and names it as one form of the panel. The Judsons depart from the general rules in suggesting that when the discussion is thrown open to the audience, it is sometimes wise for the panel members to disband and leave the discussion to the chairman and audience.

Two articles in the book *Adult Education in Action*, edited by Mary L. Ely, should be cited. They are "Panel Discussions," by M. A. Cartwright, and "The Panel as a Problem-Solving Device," by H. A. Overstreet.

Pamphlets

The two-page leaflet *Suggestions for Panel Discussion* is terse and easily read. Topics included are: What is a panel discussion?, Preparing for the panel, and Conducting the panel. In the pamphlet *Panel Discussion* only four pages are devoted to describing the technique, but most of the important points are covered. This pamphlet was written early in the history of the panel and most of the more recent writers disagree on several suggestions it makes. It is a valuable aid, however, to anyone who has had no experience with panel procedure.

Magazine Articles

Some of the better magazine articles in this field, listed in the general order of their importance, supplement the books already mentioned. Harry A. Overstreet originated the panel technique; in his article "On the Panel" are his ideas regarding it. "The Panel Method of Group Discussion," by W. A. Ross; "Panel," by Morse A. Cartwright; and "Cooperation in Thinking," by S. A. Courtis, describe the panel and discuss how it should be set up and some of the problems of the leader. In an article, "Leaders of Panel Discussion," Emory S. Bogardus suggests that it is sometimes expedient to have panel members each make 3-minute speeches. Evidently Bogardus is confusing symposium procedure with that of the panel.

Roberta Winans describes an interesting modification of the panel. When one has two groups varying in prestige, she suggests two panels separated by the leader. At the first session one carries the discussion and is questioned by the other; at the next session this order is reversed. Her article is called "The Double Panel."

Of Interest to Teachers

"The Panel Discussion Method in High School" by Paul W. Auble and "Using the Panel Discussion Method in High School Teaching," by Roben J. Maaske, are of interest to school teachers.

Of Interest to Religious Workers

Paul H. Vieth in "A New Method With an Old Purpose" describes the way one minister uses a panel discussion in the place of the regular sermon.

Forum Technique

John W. Studebaker, Commissioner of the United States Office of Education, and Chester S. Williams, Assistant Administrator of the Federal Forum Project, have done by far the most writing on forum technique. But they have concentrated their efforts on describing the advantages of forums and the general over-all organization of school-sponsored forums, usually leaving to others the task of careful description as to how the actual meetings should be conducted, the job of the leader, etc. They have also written a great deal on the Des Moines experiment—the first of the Feder-

ally sponsored forums. A number of these writings are listed under The Forum Movement, part VI.

Books and Pamphlets

Probably their most useful work, written jointly by Studebaker and Williams, is *Forum Planning Handbook*. It deals with basic organization, finance, and procedures, but contains little on technique. Here are several other very readable works by Studebaker: *Plain Talk*, *Safeguarding Democracy Through Adult Civic Education*, "Low Cost Forums for Smaller Communities," and with Chester S. Williams, *A Study of America's Forums; Choosing Our Way*.

Plain Talk describes the place of forums in the preservation of democracy, the use of a panel to question the forum speaker, the Des Moines Forum, and the need for Federal subsidy of local forums. It is listed after the *Forum Planning Handbook* because it is longer, yet it does not offer so many specific suggestions as does the *Handbook*. *Safeguarding Democracy Through Adult Civic Education* is a compilation of two speeches and three articles by Studebaker, giving his ideas on the value of forums and their place in American adult education. The final pamphlet, *A Study of America's Forums; Choosing Our Way*, presents a survey of the first 15 months of the Federal Forums as a guide to those who may be considering a forum program. Although their chief value is for the person organizing a forum, all of these works offer some help on how to conduct the forum meeting.

Magazine Articles

An article entitled "Adult Education in the Public Schools," by E. W. Balduf, offers an interesting supplement to *Choosing Our Way*. Balduf, Director of Adult Education in Des Moines, gives an account of what its leaders hoped to accomplish in the Des Moines Forum, the problems they faced, and their course through the first 7 years.

Rather challenging questions pointing in a somewhat different direction from Studebaker and his coworkers are given by John W. Herring in "Is a Nation-wide Forum Movement Possible?". He asks these questions: (1) What is the actual reach of the present forum movement? (2) What are the limits of the movement proceeding along present lines? (3) Along what new lines must the movement proceed to pass these limits and become an important national force? In answering, Herring concludes that to become an important national force the forum programs, rather than setting up a new organization, must be held in existing organizations, such as clubs, labor unions, farm organizations, and churches.

Problems of any group or organization that attempts to sponsor forums are discussed in Richard Lake's "Organization of a Forum," John W. Herring's "Forums and How to Run Them," Fred A. Moore's "Public Forums," and Otis Moore's "The Public Forum in the Small Town or Rural Community." Suggestions are made on set-up of sponsoring committee, organization, finance, advertising, and types of topics. The last-

mentioned article is strongly recommended for anyone who contemplates setting up a forum in a rural community.

Here are three articles which concern the forum speaker—what to look for in a good forum speaker, as well as suggestions for the speaker who, in addition to his talk, leads the discussion. They are "Personality and the Forum Leader," and "Psychological Aspects of Forum Leadership," both by John Brown Mason; and "Forum Leaders as Teachers," by Carroll D. Champlin. In one section of *School Plant Improvement; Public Forums; Negro Education*; and in William H. Bristow's "Forum in Family Life Education," suggestions for forum procedure are drawn from experiences in particular forums—the former refers to forums in Bowie, McLennan, and Falls Counties, Texas; the latter to those in Milwaukee, Kalamazoo, and Minneapolis.

Libraries and the Forum

The part libraries can play in preparing reading lists, displaying books on the forum topic, and similar activities is described in *Printed Page and the Public Platform*, by John Chancellor and Chester S. Williams, "Forums and Reading" by John Chancellor and "Libraries and Forums." The article by Chancellor adds little to what he says in the pamphlet. The other article refers specifically to the contributions which the library of Chattanooga, Tenn., made to the forum program in that city.

Of Interest to Religious Leaders

W. A. Anderson's "The Community Forum: Its Possibilities in the Rural Church" suggests that the rural church may well sponsor community forums. The author asks why not have a forum following Sunday School on the Sundays when there is no preaching.

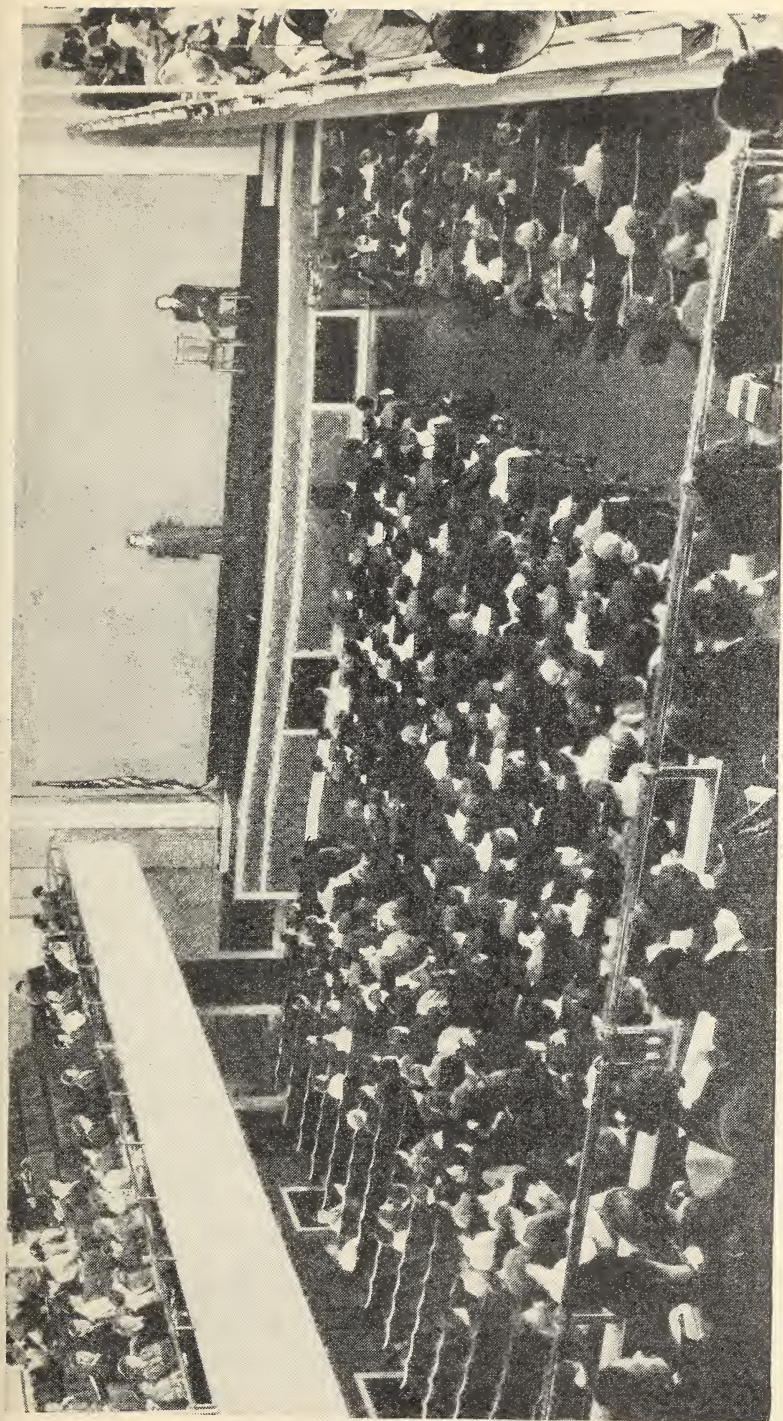
Miles H. Krumbine in "I Believe in the Sunday Evening Forums" describes an interesting experiment in religious forums. After the benediction closing the regular Sunday evening service, the author, a minister, asks that all those who wish, remain awhile and discuss the subject of the sermon. He gives here the reaction of his congregation to this procedure.

Of Interest to Teachers

Teachers should be particularly interested in the following items: *Forums for Young People*, by John W. Studebaker, Paul H. Sheats, and Chester S. Williams; "Stand Up and Talk," by Studebaker; and "The Place of Student Forums in Training for Democratic Citizenship," by Harrison C. Thomas.

Forum-Leader Training

Finally for those who are helping to train forum leaders, John Brown Mason in "For Forum Leaders" describes a course offered for this purpose at Fresno State College, California, in the summer of 1939.



Forums play their part in bringing outside opinion to challenge and broaden the community's thinking.

Radio Discussion Technique

Few organizations today do not sooner or later send out their announcement of "our new radio program," and more and more radio stations are themselves sponsoring radio forums and round tables.

One of the easiest ways to get suggestions, if one contemplates putting on a radio discussion, is to listen to some of those already on the air. Possibly some of the better known Nation-wide radio discussions are "People's Platform" over the Columbia Broadcasting System, "American Forum of the Air" over the Mutual Broadcasting System, "Town Meeting of the Air" and "Chicago Round-Table" over the National Broadcasting Company. By writing any of these sponsoring networks, one can get additional information on such points as the advance preparation and physical set-up used in their respective programs.

An excellent little bulletin written by Paul H. Sheats is called *Forums on the Air*. In the preparation of this bulletin, which is designed to aid those undertaking to sponsor radio discussion, Sheats made a survey of local radio public-affairs-discussion programs. Chapter headings are: Why Forums on the Air?, The Idea Gets a Start, Planning the Program (types of programs, scheduling and timing, selecting good subjects, getting good leaders and speakers, round-table types, equipment and staging, budgets), Program Techniques (interviews, round tables and panels, symposiums, town meeting forums, debates, legislative procedures), Audience Relations and Response, and Pattern for the Future. The appendix includes among other things a listing of radio-discussion programs by States, sample constitutions of various organizations created to sponsor these programs, topics used on a number of forums, and types of speakers invited for representative programs. This pamphlet is easily read and should be exceedingly helpful to those who lead radio discussion and to the program directors.

For one who is preparing to lead a round-table discussion over the air, John A. Griffin's article "Round-Table Discussion on the Air" offers valuable help. Griffin, a former college director of radio programs, considers the selection of members of the discussion group, preliminary sessions, and the job of the leader before and during the discussion.

Enthusiastic pictures of NBC's "Town Meeting of the Air" are given in *Town Meeting Comes to Town*, by Harry A. and Bonaro W. Overstreet; "National Heckle Hour," by Weldon Melick; and "Democracy by Discussion," by Roy A. Benjamin, Jr. As part of their "Advisory Service" for groups organized to listen to the broadcast and then continue the discussion, Town Hall (sponsor of "Town Meeting of the Air") has also published a *Town Meeting Discussion Leaders Handbook*, by George V. Denny, Jr.; and *How to Discuss; Suggestions to Group Members*. Although of genuine interest within the field, these two pamphlets would be of little help outside the field of discussion following radio broadcasts.

PART VI. HISTORY OF THE GROUP-DISCUSSION MOVEMENT

How extensive is the group-discussion movement over the nation? Is it a new thing? What success are other communities having with their forum programs?

Here are some of the books and articles describing various small-group and larger forum audiences over the country. A few of the items give the historic background of the movement. Organized round tables are first listed; then forums. It should be noted that no complete picture of the group-discussion movement today as it functions in hundreds of places is possible in these published materials. Furthermore, it is probable that some of the groups described in these articles have ceased to operate. Nevertheless, reading some of the items listed below should aid materially in understanding the scope and spirit of the discussion movement of the present day.

Round Table

Exponents of the round-table discussion include, as two of its spiritual forebears, the New England town meeting and the "cracker box confab" of the country store. John Gould's *New England Town Meeting* gives a flattering description of what took place at a typical town meeting. Photographs of those who attended are included. It is interestingly written in every man's language. "The Committee on the Universe" by John P. Gávit gives a very good picture of the cracker box confab by one who has observed those sessions from Peoria to Singapore, from Park Avenue to an Arkansas crossroad.

Writing in 1919, Glenn Frank in "The Parliament of the People" argued the need for public discussion at that time, described President Wilson's efforts to further the movement, and gave a general description of the discussion techniques then being used. It is an exceptional article.

Another excellent article, giving the scope as well as catching the spirit of the discussion movement today, is "America Talks it Over" by Stanley High. It mentions everything from the activities of the United States Department of Agriculture and the United States Office of Education to rural church forums and the old time Lyceum. "This is Our Defense" by Frederick L. Hipp might be called a supplement to this. In Vera W. Beggs "How to Stage a Marathon Round Table" is described the activity of the National Committee on the Cause and Cure of War in sponsoring round-table discussion throughout the country on international relations.

Farmer Discussion Groups—General

In 1935 a unit (now in the Bureau of Agricultural Economics) was set up in the United States Department of Agriculture, one of the chief functions of which was to aid and encourage round-table discussions among farmers. The Agricultural Extension Services of several of the States had already done considerable work in organizing these farmer discussion groups. Others joined in the movement, and State Discussion Leaders were appointed in a majority of the States. Discussion pamphlets were prepared in the Washington office, radio broadcasts were sponsored on many of the selected discussion topics, and help was given in training local discussion leaders.

Here are a number of articles which describe this work on the national level. *Schools of Philosophy for Farmers*, by Carl F. Taeusch, who has headed the work of this unit from its beginning, is the most complete. Others are "Discussing Public Policies," also by Mr. Taeusch; "Farmers Talk About National Issues," by M. L. Wilson; "Rural America Revitalizes Democracy" and "Farmers Forming Discussion Groups in More Than 40 States," both by A. Drummond Jones; and "A Crop of New Ideas on the Farms," by Roy F. Hendrickson.

For the thorough student, *Rural Trends in Depression Years; a Survey of Village-Centered Agricultural Communities, 1930-1936*, by Edmund de S. Brunner and Irving Lorge, is recommended. Pages 183-185 are concerned with the discussion groups, and pages 241-244 are devoted to the forums, lecture series, and study clubs that were found in a survey of 140 agricultural communities.

Farmer Discussion Groups—In Various States

The following articles give some idea of the scope of the organized farmer discussion groups resulting from the activities of various State discussion leaders and other educational workers:

California.—"The Talk of the Town," by Lucy Wilcox Adams.

Iowa.—"Design for Policy-making," by Helen Hill Miller, and "When Farmers Get to Arguing."

Minnesota.—Dvoracek, D. C., *Community Discussion Meetings—What? Why? How?*; "Forty Minnesota Counties Discuss the Situation"; and "Tapping Leader's Sentiment Anent Discussion Meetings in Minnesota."

Missouri.—"New Style Outlook Conferences Meet Missouri Needs."

New Hampshire.—Ayer, P. F., "The Average Man Takes a Hand in New Hampshire Public Affairs."

New York.—Gross, Alfred A., "A Community Discussion Group."

Ohio.—"Let Them Talk."

Virginia.—Hummel, B. L., *Group Discussion and County Agricultural Program Planning*.

Spain, Clarence H., "Charlotte County Adult Education Program." In this county in Virginia all the agencies and organizations come together in

a monthly county-wide meeting in putting over a unified county program. This article shows the part discussion plays in this process.

Wisconsin.—Wileden, A. F., *Five Years of Public Discussion in Rural Wisconsin*, and "Wisconsin Farmers and Business Men Reach an Understanding."

Discussion in the School

"Let's Understand—An Experiment in Group Discussion," by R. L. Golson and Guy C. Pryor, tells how older students from several high schools in Texas come together for a day to discuss student problems. Glen W. Maple, in "Student Forums and Discussion Clubs," and Robert S. Ellwood, in "Current Events by Panel Discussion," present similar ideas. In the former is told how social science classes from all high schools in South Bend, Ind., come together for a series of panel discussions on social and economic problems.

"Colorado's Discussion Groups," by Paul L. Kirk, describes a "different" annual convention held by Colorado teachers. Instead of being lectured to, they were divided into small discussion groups and did the talking themselves.

Principals of secondary schools throughout the United States have organized themselves on a district and State basis for meetings once a month to discuss mutual problems. A description of this set-up and reports on the work from various States are included in "The Discussion Group Project—Purposes and Plans" and "Progress of Discussion Groups," both by Walter E. Myer; another article entitled "The Discussion Group



"But the point the speaker isn't mentioning is that * * *

Project," and "What the States Are Doing," by Louise Mooers. On the same subject is "Improving Secondary Education Through Group Discussion," prepared by the Committee on Planning of the Department of Secondary School Principals of the National Education Association. Francis L. Bacon was chairman of this committee at the time this report was issued.

Discussion in the Library

Group discussions sponsored by libraries are described in *Helping Adults to Learn*, John M. Chancellor, editor, on pages 111-127; and in "Why Discuss?", by Elizabeth T. Turner. The first deals with libraries in Waupun, Wis.; Hunterdon County, N. J.; and Wichita, Kans.; the second deals with those in Hunterdon County, N. J.

Discussion in the Church

"Experiments in Adult Education; a Symposium," presents six interesting examples of how discussion is being used by ministers in their communities. Stanley B. Hyde, in "Using Group Discussion in Conferences of Youth," tells how discussion was used in a religious youth conference in Maine. He thinks it a problem to get conference lecturers to use the discussion method.

Study Clubs in Nova Scotia and Scandinavia

The Scandinavian countries and Nova Scotia have become noted for their successful use of rural study and discussion clubs in furthering the cooperative movement. One does not work long in the promotion of rural discussion groups before acquiring a desire to know more about the study and discussion movements in these countries. The following works cover this movement:

Nova Scotia

Three of the best works on the discussion movement in Nova Scotia are: Bertram B. Fowler's *The Lord Helps Those * * * How the People of Nova Scotia are Solving Their Problems Through Cooperation*; M. M. Coady's *Masters of Their Own Destiny: The Story of the Antigonish Movement of Adult Education Through Economic Cooperation*; and *How St. Francis Xavier University Educates for Action*, by the Extension Department of St. Francis Xavier University. Mr. Fowler writes as an outsider who made a thorough study of the movement. Father Coady is Director of Extension at St. Francis Xavier University where much of the work has found its inspiration. Both books are exceptionally well written and make interesting reading. The pamphlet is quite well done, too, but it naturally does not go into the detail that is found in the books.

An article "Study Clubs: Democracy in Action" by Martin E. Schirber gives practically as good a discussion of the Nova Scotia study clubs as do the three books. Along with it might well be read Paul L. Vogt's "Adult Education in Eastern Nova Scotia." In this article Mr. Vogt, who for many years has been active in promoting rural study and discussion groups

in the United States, compares the basic philosophy of the movement in the two countries.

Denmark

Although they probably have more in common with our public schools than with our group discussion and forum movement, the Danish Folk Schools have their roots in the desire of the Danish farm folk to understand and solve their own problems.

The Danish Folk School, written by Olive D. Campbell, a worker in the Southern Appalachians, after her year of study in the Danish Folk Schools, gives a vivid description of this system.

The book *The Folk High Schools of Denmark and the Development of a Farming Community*, by Holger Begtrup, Hans Lund, and Peter Manniche, gives an interesting and readable account of these schools from the Danish point of view. The authors were heads of Danish Folk Schools.

Josephine Goldmark's *Democracy in Denmark* is divided into two parts. Only part II, The Folk High School, by A. H. Hollman, is of interest here. In its early chapters this part of the book goes into the theory behind the movement, giving considerable attention to the ideas of Grundtvig whose thinking molded the pattern on which these schools were founded.

Sweden

The entire Swedish adult education movement is discussed in Bjarne Braatoy's *The New Sweden, A Vindication of Democracy*. A description of the study club and discussion movement is given in Chapters VII and VIII. An interesting addition is found in Ragner Lund's article "Adult Education in Sweden." C. J. Ratzlaff's "Workers' Education and Swedish Democracy" describes the 171 Swedish forums in action under the direction of the Workers' Education Association—how they are set up and the type of subjects that have been most popular.

The Forum Movement

Early History: The Chautauqua and Lyceum

Glenn Frank's "The Parliament of the People" gives the best description yet found of the discussion movement up through the first two decades of the Twentieth Century. President Wilson's attempts to further the discussion movement are described, followed by two-page histories of forum, lyceum, and chautauqua, giving origins, scope, number of people participating in each, and some of the leading men associated with each. Good supplemental reading, particularly relative to the Chautauqua Movement, is Trumbull White's "Cultivating the Knowledge Crop." Mr. White says there were 13,000 traveling "tent chautauquas" at the peak of that enterprise.

"Salvaging the Four Minute Men," by George W. Coleman, written at the close of the first World War, has particular significance in the present crisis. It describes an effort that was made, after the Armistice, to enlist

the organization of "four minute men" in a Nation-wide program of public-affairs discussion. The author suggested that the most fitting memorial that cities and towns could erect to their soldiers lost in that war would be community centers in which these discussions could take place.

The American Lyceum; Its History and Contribution to Education, by Cecil B. Hayes is the best work found on the history of the lyceum. Claude Eggertsen's "Forums Then and Now" offers an interesting addition. Eggertsen attempts to show, by comparing quotations from advocates of each, that today's forum is practically the old lyceum under a new name.

Current Description—General

The best general survey of the forum movement today is found in Mary Lillian Ely's book *Why Forums*. Miss Ely visited many of the leading forums in the United States, attended their sessions and discussed them with their sponsors and a cross section of the people of the town. She gives interesting sketches of many of these forums, attempts to get at the roots of the entire movement, and to evaluate what it is contributing to public enlightenment.

Education for Democracy; Public Affairs Forums, by John W. Studebaker and Chester S. Williams, also describes the general forum movement, and mentions various organizations sponsoring forums. Considerable space is given to a history and description of the Des Moines and other well-known forums. Problems of forum management are discussed.

Descriptions of various forums that are receiving Federal assistance are included below, in the listing by States, but here are several items that describe the general set-up and progress of the Federal Forum Project: "Recent Gains in Public Affairs Education" and "'On Our Way'—Forums" both by Chester S. Williams; *A Step Forward for Adult Civic Education*; "Public Forums Make News;" and "Forums—Under Cultivation" by Paul H. Sheats.

Another article that deserves special mention is "The Public Forum and Civic Education" by Louise B. Hill, which describes the Federal Forum Project for Negroes as it operates in Chattanooga, Tenn., and Raleigh, N. C.

One of the most exhaustive listings of forums in the United States appears from time to time in the *Handbook of Adult Education in the United States*, published under the auspices of the American Association for Adult Education. A brief descriptive paragraph is generally given regarding each forum listed. The 1934 volume, edited by Dorothy Rowden, is particularly interesting in this respect.

Current Description—By States

California.—"Education Unites a Community," by Verne R. Ross, shows the place the forum plays in a well-rounded adult-education program of a small community in California.

"A Cross-Section Round Table," by William Forbes Adams, tells how San Pedro, Calif., organized a forum down by the docks where differing philosophies clashed freely.

Colorado.—With the cooperation of its Extension Service, alumni of the University of Colorado form the sponsoring center for forums in many towns over the State. They are described by Ruth D. Means in "Alumni Forums in Colorado."

District of Columbia, Washington.—"A Capital Forum Experiment," by Helen T. Steinbarger, describes some work in Washington, D. C.

Illinois.—R. E. Dooley's "A Village Forum" describes 3 years of a growing community forum in Suburban Chicago.

Iowa—Des Moines.—John W. Studebaker, now Commissioner of the United States Office of Education and Director of the Federal Forum Project, organized the Des Moines Forum when he was Superintendent of Schools in that city. It was one of the first forums to receive the assistance of the Federal Forum Project and is now probably the most publicized forum in the country. The outstanding description of it is Mr. Studebaker's own *The American Way; Democracy at Work in the Des Moines Forum*. This book not only gives a popularly written description of the forum but also outlines the vision behind it. The 65-page appendix gives a mass of pertinent data. Other items on the Des Moines Forum are A. W. Merrill's "Des Moines Meets a Dilemma" (describing the problem presented when the original outside gift for financial aid was exhausted); W. E. Williams' "Education for Citizenship in the United States; The Des Moines Forums



Luncheon discussions are proving successful in many towns and cities.

Experiment" (presenting an Englishman's views after spending 6 weeks with the Des Moines Forum); Carroll H. Wooddy's "Forum Facts"; and Hubert Kelley's "Democracy Goes to School" (giving a well-written description of one of the meetings).

Massachusetts—Boston.—*The Challenge of the Forum; The Story of Ford Hall and the Open Forum Movement*, by Reuben Levi Lurie, is the story of a Sunday-evening forum in a Baptist Church which surmounted denominationalism to become a real social force in Boston, and one of the leading forums in the United States. This ranks with the book by Overstreet and Overstreet on the New York Town Hall and with Studebaker's on the Des Moines experiment. They are the three outstanding books that describe existing forums. The subjects and speakers for the first 23 years (through 1930) listed in the appendix give an interesting suggestion of America in transition.

Minnesota—Minneapolis.—"Minneapolis Town Hall Draws 22,000," by Allen H. Seed, Jr., describes one effort.

New Jersey—Millburn.—"Our Personal Experience with Millburn's Open Forum," by William M. Barr and O. Loise Lintz, describes another.

New York—Batavia.—"Batavia's Public Forum," by Carlos de Zafra, Jr., describes another.

New York—New York City.—*Town Meeting Comes to Town*, by Bonaro W. and Harry A. Overstreet, as has been said, tells the story of the Town Hall Forum and The National Broadcasting Company's "Town Meeting of the Air." Its writers have a keen appreciation of the job to be done and discuss it in a popular way. Other items on forums in New York are: "The Open Forum of the College of the City of New York" and "Forums to the Fore." The latter gives a brief note on forums sponsored by the Board of Education of New York City.

North Dakota—Fargo.—Caroline J. Evingson's "We are Rural America" gives the history of the Fargo-Moorhead Open Forum, outlining its conception, growth, nature of sponsoring organization, method of finance, and the Regional Forum Council that has emerged from its expanding vitality. Any group that is planning to organize a forum can get many valuable suggestions from the experience of this group in North Dakota.

Oklahoma—Tulsa.—In "Our Tomorrow; The Tulsa Public Evening Schools," Merle Prunty describes a forum program launched under the Tulsa evening schools to discuss "civic, social, economic, and political problems." Miss Prunty has another brief note on this program in "New Recruits for America."

PART VII. WHERE TO OBTAIN SUBJECT-MATTER PAMPHLETS

"Where can I get inexpensive subject-matter material written in everyday language for the use of our discussion group? The subjects the group is interested in range from parity prices to international trade. Where can I get material to give them to use as background for their discussion?" These are frequent questions.

A wealth of pamphlet material on social and economic problems is available today, but only a few of the sources can be mentioned here. An accessible and inexpensive source is found in the governmental agencies. Then the agricultural extension services of the various States are beginning to prepare readable material for this purpose. Other State agencies, such as Departments of Health, can often supply valuable information on conditions in specific counties. All departments of the Federal Government can supply popularized material in their special fields. This material is either obtainable at a nominal charge or is free.

One of the most comprehensive series of nonpartisan pamphlets offered by a private agency is the Public Affairs Pamphlets series, published by Public Affairs Committee, Inc., 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York City, New York.⁴ These booklets are well written and illustrated. To date, this series has included about 70 titles, including *Saving Our Soil, Our Taxes and What They Buy, Safeguarding Our Civil Liberties, and How Shall We Pay for Our Defense?*

A somewhat comparable series, the World Affairs Pamphlets, is published by the Foreign Policy Association in cooperation with the National Peace Conference, 8 West Fortieth Street, New York City. These pamphlets are limited to subjects connected with international relations. This Association has a second series known as Headline Books, averaging about 60 pages each; a discussion program built on each Headline Book is available.

The American Association for Adult Education, 60 East Forty-second Street, New York City, has launched a series of Defense Digests specially prepared for discussion groups on questions arising out of the defense program. Examples of the topics covered are *Women in Defense, Housing for Citizens, Freedom of Assembly and Your Town and Defense.*

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of Inter-course and Education, 405 West One Hundred and Seventeenth Street,

⁴ Since the publications mentioned in this section do not pertain to the technique or history of group discussion, they are not included in the List of Works Referred to in the Text.

New York City, has a series of discussion pamphlets entitled *We Travel Though We Stay at Home*. These pamphlets take common household items and show where the materials in them originate. Suggestive title of one pamphlet is *Foreign Trade and the Pantry Shelf*. Other pamphlet material is published by this agency from time to time.

A series of Defense Pamphlets is being prepared by the American Council on Public Affairs, 1721 Eye Street, NW., Washington, D. C. Fifteen titles in this series have been published to date.

The pamphlets published by these private agencies are all inexpensive. Many of the series can be found in local libraries. Where this is not possible, a list of titles and prices can be secured by writing directly to the publishers.

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